

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01438 311507Z

ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1438

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EWWT, LE

SUBJECT: PORT OF TRIPOLI

1. SUMMARY. ON MARCH 27 EMBOFF VISITED PORT OF TRIPOLI, WHERE ABOUT TWENTY FREIGHTERS WERE IN HARBOR. CHIEF ENGINEER SADALLAH BARKE SAID ONLY SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE THE PORT HAD SUFFERED DURING THE WAR WAS THE EXPLOSION OF A SHIP ON SEPTEMBER 21, 1976, ALONGSIDE ONE OF THE KEYS. BARKE EXPECTED THE PORT TO UNLOAD ALMOST 850,000 METRIC TONS THIS YEAR, MORE THAN ITS RATED CAPACITY. THE PORT HAS A GRAIN SILO WHICH CAN HOLD 4,000 METRIC
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01438 311507Z

TONS OF WHEAT, AND THERE ARE TWO FUNCTIONING FREE ZONES. THE PORT OF TRIPOLI, UNLIKE THAT OF BEIRUT, IS MANAGED BY A GOVERNMENT OFFICE. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MARCH 27 EMBOFF VISITED PORT OF TRIPOLI. THREE SYRIAN TANKS AND LEBANESE POLICEMEN GUARDED ROAD ENTRANCE. PORT AREA WAS CROWDED WITH TRUCKS, GOODS, AND PEOPLE. ABOUT

TWENTY FREIGHTERS, RANGING IN APPARENT DISPLACEMENT FROM 600 METRIC TONS TO 2000 METRIC TONS, WERE IN HARBOR. EMBOFF MET WITH PORT'S CHIEF ENGINEER, SADALLAH BARKE, WHO OFFERED FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

3. FACILITIES, DAMAGE, AND CAPACITY.

A. THE PORT HAS A SINGLE BASIN, EIGHT MEETERS DEEP, AS WELL AS A SINGLE CHANNEL, TWO KILOMETERS LONG, 150 METERS WIDE AND NINE METERS DEEP. THERE ARE TWO KEYS, AN EAST-WEST KEY 110.85 METERS LONG AND A NORTH-SOUTH KEY 603.51 METERS LONG, WITH A TOTAL LENGTH OF 714.36 METERS. THE PORT IN PRINCIPLE CAN UNLOAD 1,000 METRIC TONS PER YEAR PER METER OF KEY LENGTH AND THUS HAS THE THEORETIC CAPACITY TO UNLOAD 714,360 METRIC TONS ANNUALLY.

B. THE PORT SUFFERED ONLY ONE INCIDENT OF SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE DURING THE FIGHTING. ON SEPTEMBER 21, 1976, FOR UNKNOWN REASONS, A SHIP BLEW UP ALONG THE NORTH-SOUTH KEY AND SEVERELY DAMAGED 100 METERS OF ITS LENGTH, THUS REDUCING THE PORT'S ANNUAL CAPACITY BY 100,000 METRIC TONS. BEFORE THIS INCIDENT, THE PORT HAD 17 TRANSIT SHEDS IN EXCELLENT CONDITION WITH A TOTAL AREA OF 38,420 METERS; ELEVEN SHEDS 80 BY 20 METERS AND SIX SHEDS 80 BY 34 METERS. HOWEVER, THE EXPLOSION TOTALLY DESTROYED ONE SMALLER SHED, SEVERELY DAMAGED THE ROOFING OF TWO LARGER SHEDS, AND CAUSED LIGHT DAMAGE TO THE REMAINING 14 SHEDS. NEITHER THE KEY NOR WAREHOUSES HAVE YET BEEN REPAIRED, AND PART OF THE EXPLODED SHIP REMAINS ALONGSIDE THE DOCK.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01438 311507Z

C. IN 1973, 1974, AND 1975, THE PORT EXCEEDED ITS THEORETIC CAPACITY AND UNLOADED ABOUT 850,000 METRIC TONS ANNUALLY. IN 1976, THE VOLUME DROPPED TO 500,000 METRIC TONS. IN 1977, VOLUME WOULD PROBABLY APPROACH 850,000 METRIC TONS AGAIN, DESPITE THE DAMAGED KEY. THE PORT UNLOADED 55,000 METRIC TONS IN JANUARY AND 45,000 METRIC TONS IN FEBRUARY, TRADITIONALLY THE TWO LEAST ACTIVE MONTHS OF THE YEAR. MOREOVER, THE REOPENING OF BEIRUT PORT IS UNLIKELY TO DIMINISH THE ACTIVITY OF TRIPOLI PORT.

4. GRAIN SILO AND FREE ZONES.

A. THE PORT HAS A GRAIN SILO WHICH CAN HOLD 4,000 METRIC TONS OF WHEAT, BUT IS EMPTY AT THE MOMENT. THE SILO HAS NO AUTOMATIC LOADING OR UNLOADING EQUIPMENT AND IS USED MOSTLY TO STORE WINTER WHEAT, WHICH IS HARVESTED IN THE AKKAR, BROUGHT TO THE PORT BY TRUCK, AND DESTINED FOR FURTHER DISTRIBUTION WITHIN LEBANON. THE SILO IS RARELY

USED FOR WHEAT BROUGHT IN BY SHIP.

B. THERE ARE TWO FREE ZONES, WHERE THE PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY AT PRESENT IS THE FABRICATION OF WOODEN ARTICLES SUCH AS CHESTS, BUT WHERE A 600 TON FREIGHTER IS ALSO UNDER CONSTRUCTION. NO DUTY IS LEVIED WHEN RAW MATERIALS ENTER THE ZONES, BUT CUSTOMS MUST BE PAID WHEN THE FINISHED PRODUCT LEAVES.

5. MANAGEMENT AND PLANS.

A. UNLIKE BEIRUT'S HARBOR, WHICH IS MANAGED BY THE PRIVATELY OWNED BEIRUT PORT COMPANY, TRIPOLI'S HARBOR IS MANAGED BY THE GOL'S OFFICE OF EXPLOITATION OF THE PORT OF TRIPOLI, A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS ENTITY UNDER THE MINISTRY OF ELECTRIC AND WATER RESOURCES. BECAUSE BEIRUT PORT IS MANAGED BY A PRIVATE COMPANY, THE GOL WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY CARRYING

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 01438 311507Z

OUT PLANS CALLING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINGLE AUTHORITY TO RUN ALL LEBANESE PORTS.

B. THE PORT OFFICE HAS DRAWN UP PLANS TO BUILD A SECOND BASIN EAST OF THE PRESENT ONE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE PRESENTLY NO REALISTIC PROSPECTS FOR GETTING FUNDS FOR THIS PROJECT, WHICH WOULD COST AN ESTIMATED LL 500 MILLION. PARKER

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